

*Plan and prepare*

# ROUTEBURN TRACK



Duration: 2–4 days  
Distance: 33 km (one way)



Great Walks season:  
29 October 2019 – 30 April 2020



Department of  
Conservation  
*Te Papa Atawhai*

# ROUTE BURN TRACK

The Routeburn Track is the ultimate alpine adventure, taking you through ice-carved valleys and below the majestic peaks of the Southern Alps/ Kā Tiritiri o te Moana.

A short trip from bustling Queenstown, this Great Walk links Mount Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks in Te Wāhipounamu – South West New Zealand World Heritage Area. Weaving through meadows, reflective tarns and alpine gardens, you'll be rewarded with spectacular vistas over vast mountain ranges and valleys.

The Routeburn Track can be hiked in either direction. The track is well marked and signposted, but some sections are steep and rough and may be muddy and slippery. Poor weather conditions can make this walk challenging, even in the Great Walks season.

This brochure describes a 3-day hike for independent, non-guided walkers during the Great Walks season (29 October 2019 – 30 April 2020).



Outside the Great Walks season (May to October) walking conditions are more hazardous – see the safety information.

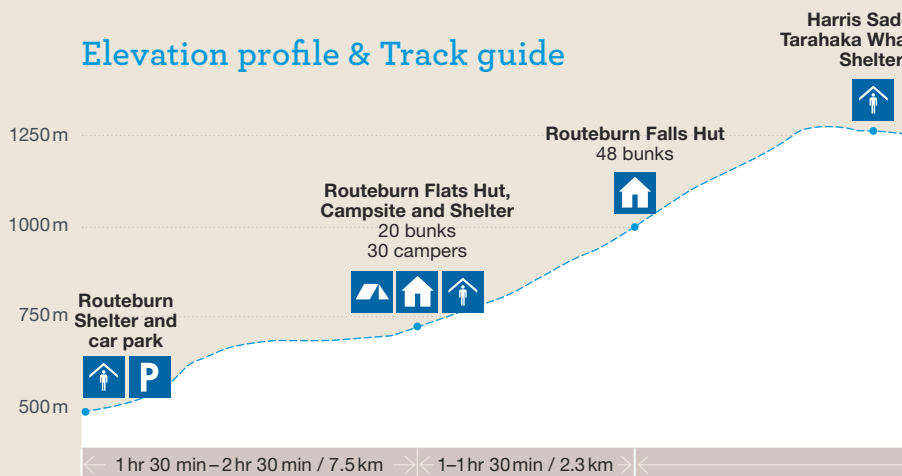


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## Elevation profile & Track guide



**Day 1: Routeburn Shelter to Routeburn Falls Hut**



### 3–4 hours, 9.8 km





The track begins at Routeburn Shelter, gently winding alongside the crystal-clear Route Burn (river). After passing Sugarloaf Stream, you'll climb to Bridal Veil Waterfall and continue above the gorge. A swing bridge leads to open grassed flats, and the Routeburn Flats Hut and Campsite. The track then climbs steadily through stunning beech forest, providing views of the Humboldt Mountains. End the day at Routeburn Falls Hut, on the edge of the bushline and close to the impressive Routeburn Falls cascade.

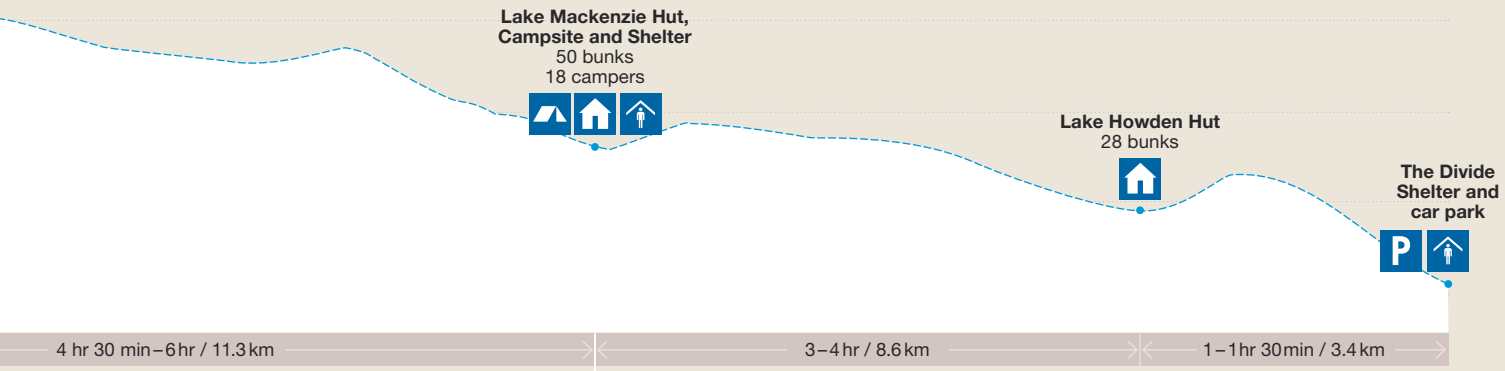


COVER: Lake Harris, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

ABOVE LEFT TO RIGHT: Routeburn Track, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz)); mountain views, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz)); Lake Mackenzie, Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

MAIN PHOTO: Key Summit, Shellie Evans ([tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz](http://tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz))

 hut
  campsite
  shelter and toilet
  car park



**Day 2: Routeburn Falls Hut to Lake Mackenzie Hut**



**Day 3: Lake Mackenzie Hut to The Divide**

**4 hours 30 minutes – 6 hours, 11.3 km**

On day 2, you'll climb steadily up the valley, through wetlands and tussock-covered flats, before sidling along the bluffs above Lake Harris to reach the highest point on the track at Harris Saddle/Tarahaka Whakatipu (1,255 metres).

The track then descends and traverses along the exposed Hollyford Face, with expansive views over the Darran Mountains. This section of the track is well-known for its impressive array of alpine plants. A steady descent leads to Lake Mackenzie Hut, set beside the enchanting Lake Mackenzie.

**4 hours – 5 hours 30 minutes, 12 km**

Leaving Lake Mackenzie Hut, the track crosses a small flat before climbing to the bushline. A gradual descent then leads past the 'Orchard', an open grassy area dotted with ribbonwood trees, to the impressive Earland Falls (174 metres). The track continues its descent through beech forest to Lake Howden Hut and on to The Divide. A popular side trip (1 hr 30 min) to Key Summit climbs to an alpine wetland with panoramic views over Fiordland mountains and alpine lakes.





Photo: Sabine Bernert

Air New Zealand partners with the Department of Conservation to help bring native birds back to the beautiful Great Walks.



Photo: Daniel Pietzsch, [www.flickr.com/photos/pie4dan](http://www.flickr.com/photos/pie4dan), CC By-NC 2,0

### Conservation story

1 DOC has teamed up with Air New Zealand, Genesis and the Routeburn Dart Wildlife Trust to support and expand conservation projects on the Routeburn Track, aiming to 'bring back our birds'. Boosted by the partnerships, the number of stoat traps has been quadrupled across more than 40 km of the track. These traps protect vulnerable birds like the rare **blue duck/whio**, **rock wren/tuke** and **yellowhead/mohua**. Thanks to the increased trapping, whio, rock wren and mohua are now being seen - if you're lucky you might spot one.

2 Trampers have a choice of four comfortable, well-equipped huts along the track. **Routeburn Falls Hut** is only 3-4 hours from the road end and makes a great overnight trip for families. People of all ages will enjoy the world-class view.

3 Bird watchers can feast their eyes on **cheeky kea**, tiny rifleman/tititipounamu, mohua and paradise shelducks, to name just a few.

4 Flower lovers can't miss the largest fuchsia in the world, the **kōtukutuku**, growing up to 12 metres tall. It is especially noticeable between The Divide and Key Summit.

5 Get close to one of Fiordland's most impressive waterfalls, **Earland Falls** (174 m). If you're lucky, you might see a rainbow at its base.



Photo: Bernard Spragg



Photo: Shellie Evans ([tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz](http://tikitouringnz.blogspot.co.nz))



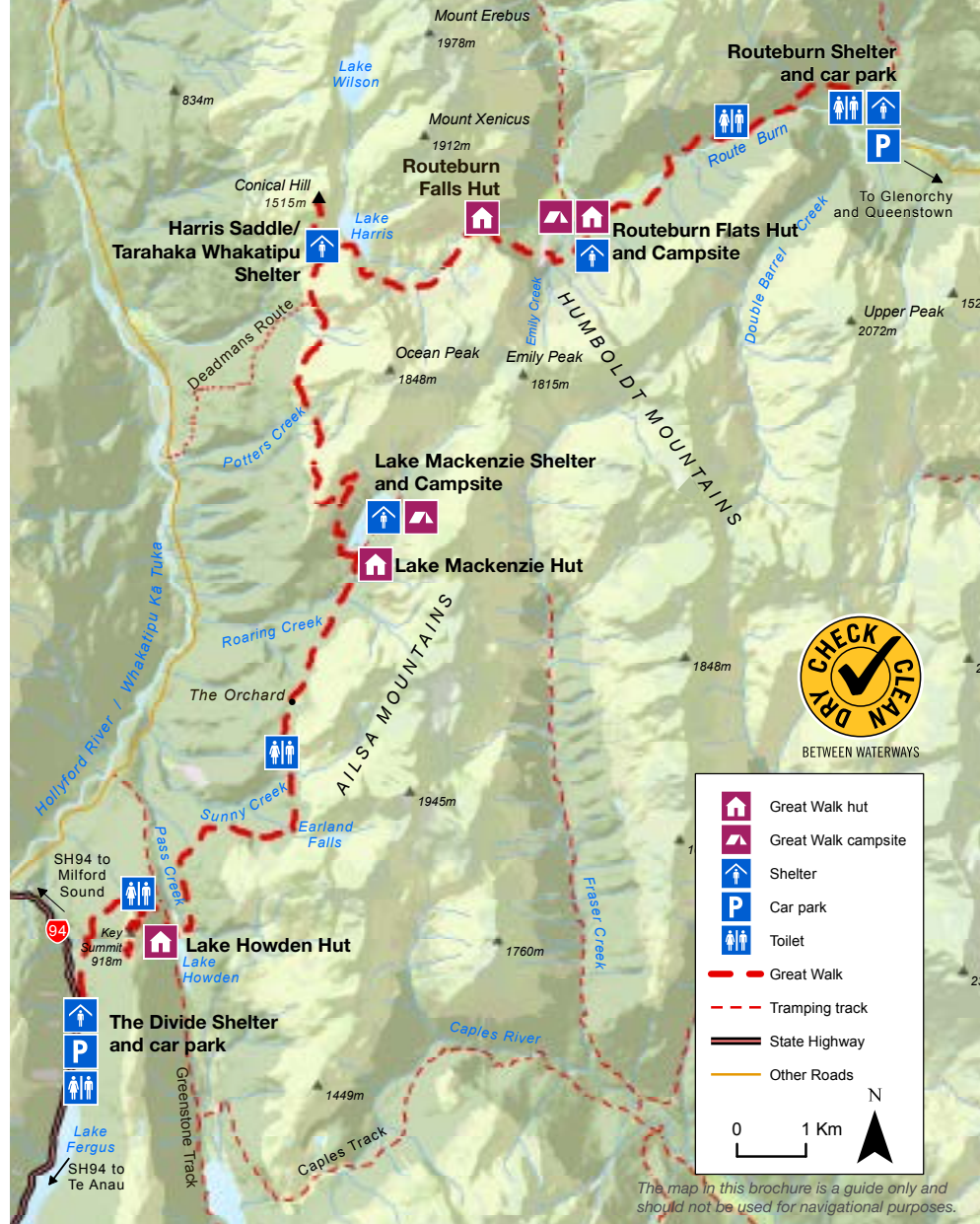
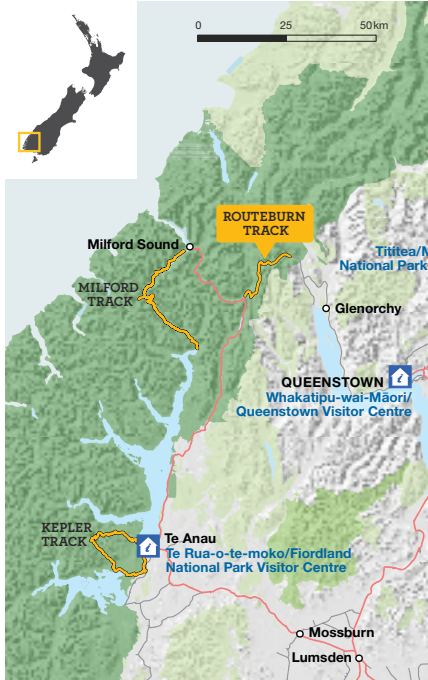
Photo: Keri Moyle ([signsoflife.co.nz](http://signsoflife.co.nz))

## Getting there

The Routeburn Track is accessed by road from the following locations:

- **Routeburn Shelter:** 30 minutes, 25 km drive along a partially unsealed road from Glenorchy.
- **The Divide Shelter:** 1 hour 30 minutes, 85 km from Te Anau.

Please note: the road distance between each end of the track is 325 km, so you'll need to arrange transport at each end.



The map in this brochure is a guide only and should not be used for navigational purposes.

## Places to stay

DOC operates 4 huts and 2 campsites along the Routeburn Track, which **must be booked well in advance** during the Great Walks season (29 October 2019 – 30 April 2020) to avoid disappointment.



Photo: John Strother (panafoot.com)



### Great Walks huts

**New Zealand rate**  
\$65 per adult per night;  
17 years and under free  
(booking required).

**International rate**  
\$130 per person per night for all  
ages (booking required).

During the Great Walks season the huts have bunks, mattresses, heating, toilets, basic cooking facilities, solar-powered lighting and cold running water. A DOC ranger is in residence. The huts do not provide food, cooking utensils, showers or bedding.

Outside the Great Walks season facilities are greatly reduced and there are no DOC rangers. Booking is not required, huts and campsites are first come, first served and fees are reduced. See the DOC website for details.



### Great Walks campsites

**New Zealand rate**  
\$20 per adult per night;  
17 years and under free  
(booking required).

**International Rate**  
\$40 per person per night for all  
ages (booking required).

Great Walks campsites offer basic facilities including toilets, sinks and a water supply. Routeburn campsites have picnic tables and cooking shelters. Campers may not use hut facilities.

## What do I do next?



Start off at [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn) for more information.



Book your huts and campsites online at [bookings.doc.govt.nz](http://bookings.doc.govt.nz).



Book your transport to and from the track.



Buy your food and **pack your bags** – download the Great Walks packing list and make sure you have everything you need for a 4-day independent unguided walk.



Read up on **safety** and make sure you're well prepared for your journey and changeable weather at [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn).



Visit the closest **DOC Visitor Centre** (Queenstown or Te Anau) to pick up your **tickets and official track guide**, and chat with the friendly staff for the latest weather forecast and track conditions.



**All set!** Lace up your boots and get hiking. Don't forget to share your experience on [facebook.com/GreatWalks](https://www.facebook.com/GreatWalks).

**For in-depth local knowledge, visit either the Queenstown or Fiordland National Park Visitor Centres:**

Queenstown Visitor Centre  
Phone: +64 3 442 7935

Email: [queenstownvc@doc.govt.nz](mailto:queenstownvc@doc.govt.nz)

Fiordland National Park Visitor Centre  
Phone: +64 3 249 7924

Email: [greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz](mailto:greatwalksbooking@doc.govt.nz)

[greatwalks.co.nz](http://greatwalks.co.nz)

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## Know before you go

It is **important** to plan your trip thoroughly to make sure you stay safe. Before you go, know the **Outdoor Safety Code** – 5 Simple rules to help you #MakeItHomeNZ.

- 1. Plan your trip.** Choose a trip that fits your abilities. Make sure you have enough time to do your walk, plus extra time. Book accommodation, transport and transfers to the start/end of the track early.
- 2. Tell someone your plans.** Tell someone where you are going and when you'll be back. Ask them to call emergency services if you haven't returned on time. Consider carrying a personal locator beacon, as there is no cellphone reception on most tracks.
- 3. Be aware of the weather.** New Zealand weather is very changeable. Even if it's summer

or the forecast is good, you should always carry a rain jacket and warm clothing. Check [metservice.com](http://metservice.com) for the most up-to-date forecast.

- 4. Know your limits.** A good level of fitness is needed to walk the track. Read about the track carefully to make sure it suits your abilities. Always follow the track markers and signposted tracks – going off-track can be hazardous, even for experienced walkers. Don't be afraid to turn back.
- 5. Take sufficient supplies.** Take the right gear, including extra food, clothing and equipment in case something goes wrong. You'll have to carry everything you need, as you can't buy food or equipment at Great Walks huts or campsites.

You can find more information on safety at [www.doc.govt.nz/safety](http://www.doc.govt.nz/safety) or [www.adventuresmart.nz](http://www.adventuresmart.nz).

## Safety on the Routeburn Track

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- The alpine sections of the Routeburn Track are not recommended for children under the age of 10, due to the exposed mountain environment and weather that can change very quickly. An overnight stay at Routeburn Flats, Routeburn Falls or Lake Howden huts is a suitable family option.
- There are steep drop-offs along sections of the whole Routeburn Track. Mind your step and supervise children.
- Fiordland and Mount Aspiring National Parks are in an area with high rainfall and changeable weather. Cold temperatures, snow, strong winds and heavy rain can happen at any time of the year. Be prepared for all conditions.

→ The Routeburn Track is complex avalanche terrain and the risk of avalanche is present throughout winter and often into December. During the Great Walks season, DOC manages this risk. Walkers may be flown (at their cost) over dangerous sections.

→ Go to [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn) 'Know before you go' section for detailed safety information, and 'What to take' section for a full gear list.

**Remember – your safety is your responsibility**



You are strongly recommended **NOT to attempt this track** between early May and late October (outside the Great Walks season). The winter environment in Fiordland and Mt Aspiring National Park is very cold and wet, with ice, snow, avalanches and short daylight hours.

DOC is unable to manage any hazards outside the Great Walks season. Bridges are removed, as floods and avalanches occur on these tracks during winter.

To attempt the track in winter conditions, you need to be very experienced in backcountry winter navigation, have river crossing expertise and appropriate alpine skills and equipment. **Hut facilities are greatly reduced** – with no cooking gas, a limited water supply and no hut wardens or emergency hut radios.

For more information, see 'Outside the Great Walks season' at [greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn](http://greatwalks.co.nz/routeburn).